

Appl. No. 10/506,861
Response Dated June 4, 2007
Reply to Office Action dated December 20, 2006

Amendments to the Drawings

Replacement drawing sheets accompanying this response present minor revisions of FIGs. 14 and 17. As indicated on "Annotated Sheets" which also accompany this response, the revision of FIG. 14, drawing sheet 15/20, replaces an erroneous reference number 268 with the correct reference number 286 to thereby conform FIG. 14 to FIGs. 16, 17, 18A and 18B. Analogously, the revision of FIG. 17, drawing sheet 18/20, repositions a lead line to conform FIG. 17 with other drawing FIGs. such as FIG. 15 on drawing sheet 18/20.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets
 Annotated Sheets Showing Changes

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REMARKS

In view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks, the Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application.

Objections and Rejections

The Office Action dated December 20, 2006:

4. rejects claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite in that it fails to point out what is included or excluded by the claim language;
5. rejects claims 1 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent no. 5,674,039 entitled "System for Transferring Articles Between Controlled Environments" that issued October 7, 1997, on a patent application filed by Delroy Walker, Joseph Zihmer, Danny Furches and Christopher J. Garmer ("the Walker, et al. patent");
6. rejects claims 2 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Walker, et al. patent as applied to claim 1, and further in view of published Japanese patent application no. 06013453 A entitled "Identification of Cassettes" that was published January 21, 1994, and was filed in the name of Kawasaki Steel Corp ("the Kawasaki Steel published application");

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7. rejects Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Walker, et al. patent as applied to claim 1, and further in view of United States Patent no. 5,695,562 entitled "Processing Apparatus" that issued December 9, 1997, on a patent application filed by Kengo Mizosaki ("the Mizosaki patent");
8. rejects claims 11-13, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over over the Walker, et al. patent as applied to claim 10, and further in view of United States Patent no. 5,409,348 entitled "Substrate Transfer Method" that issued April 25, 1995, on a patent application filed by Fujio Suzuki ("the Suzuki patent");
9. rejects claims 5 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over over the Walker, et al. patent as applied to claim 1, and further in view of published United States Patent Application no. US 2003/0085582 A1 entitled "End-Effectors for Handling Microelectronic Workpieces" that was published May 8, 2003, on a patent application filed on September 2, 2003, by Daniel J. Woodruff, Randy A. Harris, James J. Erickson and Douglas W. Carr claiming priority from several prior patent applications the earliest of which was filed on December 15, 1997, ("the Woodruff, et al. published patent application");

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10. rejects claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over over the Walker, et al. patent as applied to claim 1, and further in view of United States Patent no. 6,612,590 entitled "Apparatus and Methods for Manipulating Semiconductor Wafers" that issued September 2, 2003, on a patent application filed on January 12, 2001, by Stephen D. Coomer, John Francis McIntee, Jozsef Michael Iha, Robert T. Borra, Eric Lusby and Michael J. Lombardi ("the Coomer, et al. patent");
11. rejects claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over over the Walker, et al. and Woodruff, et al. patents as applied to claim 5, and further in view of the Coomer, et al. patent;
12. rejects claims 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Walker, et al. patent in view of the Kawasaki Steel published application; and
13. objects to claims 6 and 14 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, and declares that claims 6 and 14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Description of Amendments

Applicants request amendment of two consecutive paragraphs that begin on page 4 in line 30 so the text appearing there

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summarizes the subject matter encompassed respectively by the texts of independent claims 6 and 20 as amended by this response.

Applicants request amendment of paragraphs appearing in the published Patent Cooperation Treaty ("PCT") patent application's specification which begin on pages 5, 17, 19 and 21, respectively, to:

1. remove an erroneous blank, " ";
2. add a missing noun phrase;
3. correct a typographical error;
4. add a missing word; and
5. correct a punctuation error.

Claims 1-5, 17 and 18 have been canceled.

Formerly dependent claim 6 has been rewritten into independent form, and claim 19, having a text which is the same as that of original claim 4 except for the claim's dependency, has been added to the claims pending in the patent application. Dependent claims 7 and 9, which as originally filed both depended from dependent claim 5, have been amended to depend from now independent claim 6. Dependent claim 10, which when originally depended from independent claim 1, has been amended to depend from now independent claim 6.

Independent claim 20, added by this response, encompasses the subject matter of original dependent claim 14. Dependent claims

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21-33, added by this response, respectively encompass the subject matter of original dependent claims 2-9, 11-13, 15 and 16.

Conclusion

Because the preceding amendment of the claims incorporates the subject matter both of claim 6 and of claim 14 respectively in amended independent claims 6 and 21, and because all dependent claims now pending in this patent application depend, either directly or indirectly, from amended independent claim 6 or 21, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims now pending in this patent application are allowable, and requests that the patent application pass swiftly to issue.

Respectfully submitted



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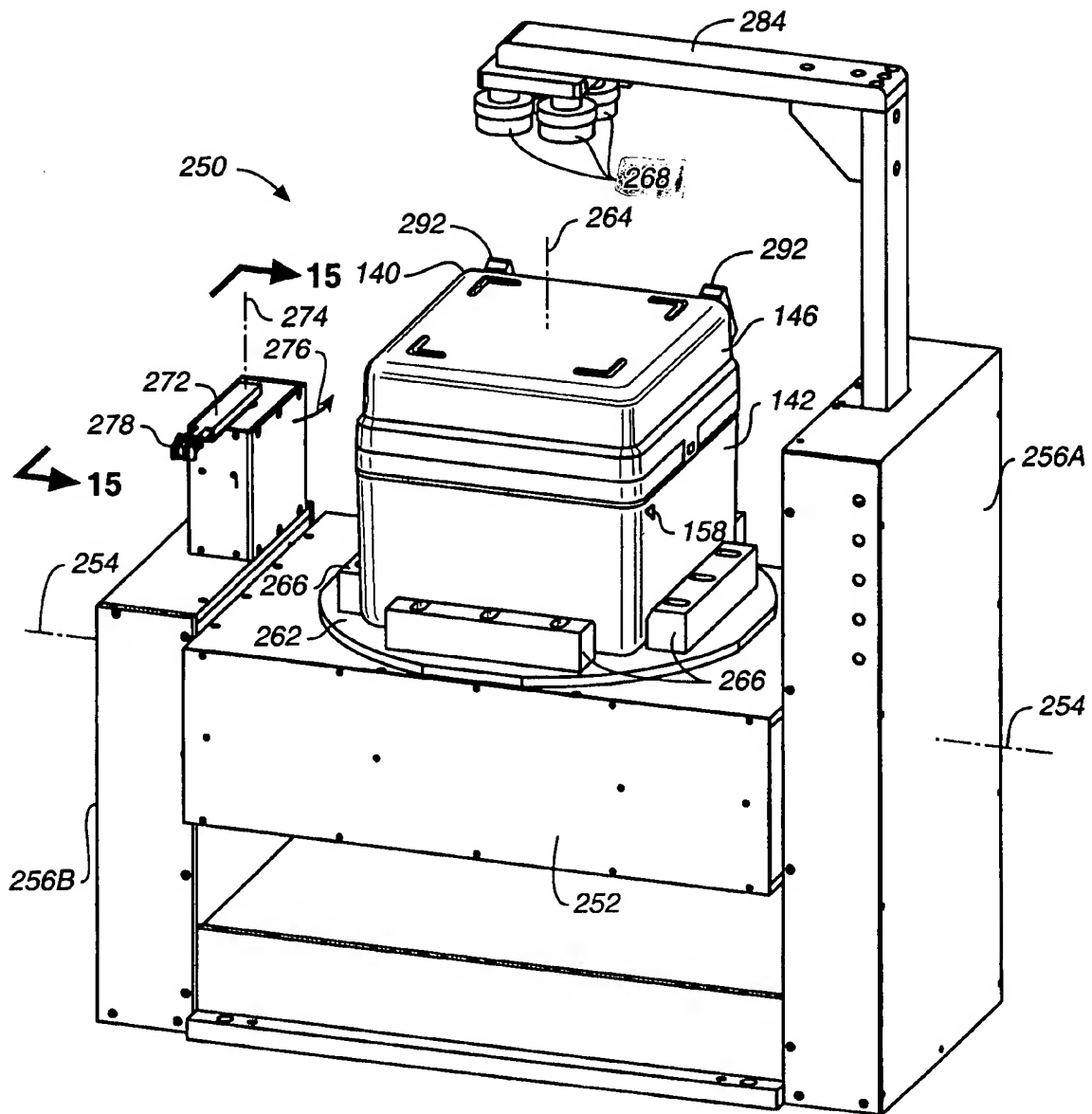


FIG. 14

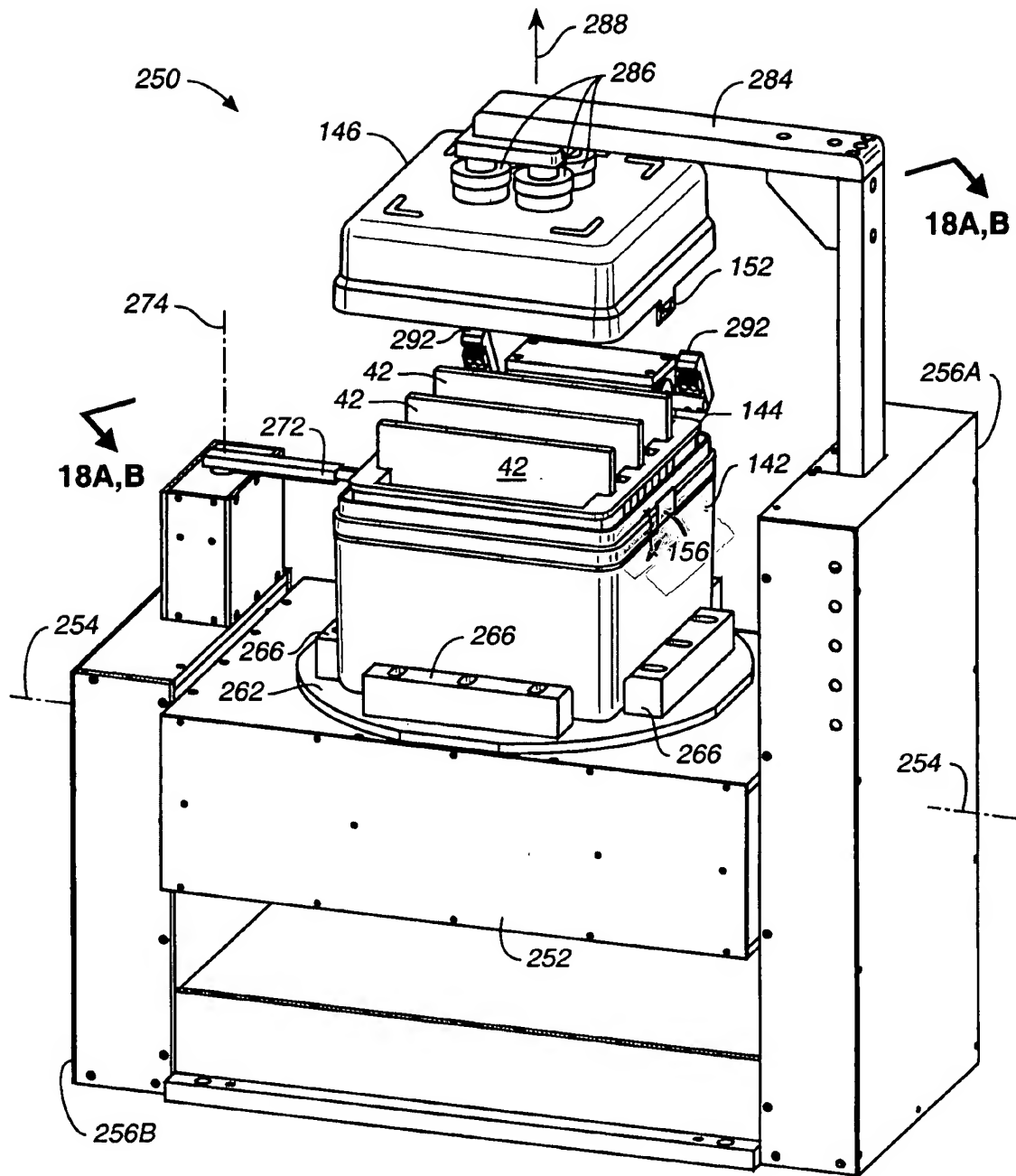


FIG. 17